

April 2, 1936.

Miss Lucy McQuillan,  
Teachers' College,  
New Britain, Conn.

Dear Miss McQuillan:

This to give you information about the  
Lyme artists as requested in your letters to Mr. Cline and  
to me.

There are several points of special interest.  
The Lyme Art Association, though not formally organized until  
1914, is America's first and therefore oldest summer art  
group. It began in 1900 when Henry W. Ranger (deceased) came  
to Old Lyme to paint. Other artists joined him. In 1902  
a first exhibition was given in the Old Lyme public  
library. It lasted, rather, it was offered, for but one two  
day, from 10 a. m. to 6 p. m. Admission 50cts. This was  
the first of what is now termed the Lyme Art Association's  
Annual Oil Exhibition. Incidentally, that held in the gallery  
at Old Lyme last summer was the 35th Annual Exhibition. being

Exhibiting in the library in 1902 were  
such men as Ranger, Childe Hassam, Arthur Dawson, Charles  
H. Davis, Gifford Beal. These artists also exhibited in  
1903 when the exhibition period was extended to three  
days.

At about this same time Frank Vincent Dumond,  
Louis Paul Dessar, Will Howe, Will Howe Foote, Clark Voorhees,  
Henry Rankin Poore and Willard L. Metcalf joined the group.

In 1904 came Edward F. Rook, Carleton Wiggins, and  
the latter's son, Guy Wiggins. In 1907 one finds the  
foregoing and also George M. Brimble, William Chadwick, Harry  
L. Hoffman, William S. Robinson, Charles Verin and others  
painting and exhibiting at Old Lyme. The shows had been  
extended to five days. Later came Charles Bittinger, Chauncey F  
Ryder Charles Ebert, Wilson Irvine, Platt Hubbard, Woodhull  
Adams, Ivan G. Olinisky, Percival L. Rosseau, Robert Vonnoh,  
Bruce Crane, Everett L. Warner, Gregory Smith, Edward Volkert,  
Lucien Abrams, Frank A. Bicknell, George B. Burr, Winfield  
Scott Cline, Margaret Cooper (Mrs. Elisha H. Cooper of New  
Britain who, with Lydia Longacre, miniature painter, was one  
of the first two women artist members of the Association.  
I distinguish artist members from Associate Members there  
being several hundred of the latter). Also: Clifford Gray-  
son, Eugene Higgins, James Goodwin McManus, Lawton Parker,  
Elinor Lathrop Sears, Will S. Taylor, Tosca Olinisky, Gertrude  
Nason, Mary Roberts Ebert and Ogden M. Pleissner. The group  
includes two sculptors--Bessie Potter Vonnoh and Burr Miller.

The foregoing does not list all who have painted or modeled at Lyme but numbers the majority. As you will of course know, that all are now active artist members. Many are no longer living. Some have gone elsewhere to work. The now active artist members of the Lyme Art Association are Abrams, Bicknell, Brewster, Burr, Chadwick, Clime, Cooper, Crane, Dassar, DuMont, Charles and Mary Roberts Ebert, Fitch, Foote, Grayson, Higgins, Hoffman, Hubbard, Irvine, Longacre, McManus, Miller, Nason, Ivan G. and Tosca Olinsky, Parker, Poore, Robinson, Rock, Rosseau, Sears, Smith, Taylor, Vexin, Bessie Potter Vonnob, Warner, ~~and~~ Guy Wiggins and Pleissner. A total of 38 artist members.

The most recently elected artist member is Ogden M. Pleissner. He is the youngest artist to be represented in New York's Metropolitan Museum permanent collection. It is doubtful if any art group in this country is so widely represented in American and foreign museum and private collections. Works by the Association's present active artists are found in more than ~~xxx~~ seventy museum and public galleries here and abroad. These range from the Metropolitan, National, Corcoran and Carnegie to others as distant as the National Gallery of New Zealand. I underscore active for were we to include deceased members the number would be still greater. The writer has just returned from a tour of the museums of the Pacific Coast, southwest and middle Western States. Everywhere directors knew of the Lyme group not only because of its widely known annual exhibitions in its now famous gallery but because their own collections contained one or more works by Lyme men and women.

We think of them and speak of them as the Lyme group yet as a matter of fact and check-up only 5 out of the 38 artist members are natives of Connecticut: Burr, Taylor, Margaret Cooper, McManus and El. Lathrop Sears. Taken in their entirety the artist members in point of nativity are from 15 different states and 4 foreign countries. Thus the group is in only one sense a "local" organization. And not even that to the extent that some may suppose. Perhaps it should be explained that the Lyme group is not a "colony" in the "arty" sense of the word. That is to say they do not live in homes or apartments closely associated as, say, in Greenwich Village. They do own homes in the Lyme territory--either summer or the year around residences. By this territory is roughly meant in one or another of the Lyme townships. Twenty-nine out of the 38 artist members own such domiciles. But in some cases these homes are as much as 12 miles apart.

Not that these homes are occupied throughout the 12 months. The winter season is likely to find Association artists painting in several quarters of the United States. Some in Florida--Mrs. Cooper, Winfield Scott Cline, Gregory Smith and Charles Vezin, for example. William S. Robinson has this past winter been painting in Virginia and Mississippi; Lucien Abrams in Texas, Burr Miller modeling in Southern California; Will Howe Foote painting the natives of Jamaica; William Chadwick working at and around Princeton, New Jersey, Ogden M. Pleissner in the northwest, Platt Hubbard in Bermuda, Will S. Taylor in Old Mexico, Lawton Parker in France, Wilson Irvine in Kansas, Charles and Mary Roberts Ebert on the west coast of Florida, etc. etc.

Though the annual oil exhibition held each summer in the gallery at Old Lyme shows much of the Association artists' most recent work it is not be supposed that they are not almost constantly exhibiting elsewhere. Traveling and more stationary galleries exhibit their work.

The writer having just returned to Lyme has only made the sketchiest of check up thus far on the past winter's doings of Association members. In view of this it hardly seems fair to enumerate the check. However, it will give you some idea: Canvases by Eugene Higgins and Ivan G. Olinsky have been selected for the special exhibition of contemporary American artists to be shown at the Exposition in San Diego, Calif. These will be already hanging in the Palace of Fine Arts there. Lucien Abrams will have works in the new Museum of Fine Arts about to be completed in Dallas, Texas in connection with the Texas Centennial. Ivan Olinsky and Louis Paul Dessar exhibited at the National Academy show in New York city this winter. Guy Wiggins, Percival Rosseau and Winfield Scott Cline gave one-man shows. Wilson Irvine exhibited in the New York Central galleries and Everett Warner was shown in the gallery of contemporary American art in the Toledo Art Museum. Works by Eugene Fitch appear in the first series of lithographs issued by the American Artists School, New York. Mrs. Ogden M. Pleissner's water colors of Connecticut barns gave art lovers much pleasure in the Memphis watercolor show.

The gallery situated on the historic Boston Post road at the edge of Old Lyme was opened in 1924. It is one of the few anywhere that has been built by and for artists. It is without endowment of any kind. It depends for its income solely upon the admission money charged to the exhibitions.

dues from associate and artist members and the relatively small commission charged the artist when a work is sold.

It will be recalled that the first exhibition given at Old Lyme's public library in 1902 was for one day only. Now there are three annual exhibitions. The so-called Water Color show (it also includes prints, pastels, lithographs but never oils or sculpture) opens in mid-June. This is followed immediately ~~xxx~~ by the Annual Exhibition of Oil Paintings and Sculpture. Lastly comes the Autumn show. Last year, 1935, the gallery was open for 101 days. During that period of time it enjoyed visitors from 42 different states of the Union and a number of foreign countries.

The Autumn show is for Association members only and is confined to oil and sculpture. The other two exhibitions include the works of members and non-member artists. Anyone who has worked in the Lyme territory for two months out of the 12 months preceding an exhibition may submit. The Association artist members sitting as a jury decide whether the work submitted is up to the standards set by the jury. If it meet this requirement that is all there is to it. There is no hanging fee; no space fee of any kind. The two-months working-in-the-Lyme-territory restriction is to prevent anyone from coming from anywhere and leaving pictures. Though spacious for a "small gallery" (there are three exhibition wings) the wall space is nevertheless limited and it has always been felt that men or women not interested enough to paint for a reasonable time in the environs should not be permitted to crowd out those who do. Incidentally, Marian Hungerford, of New Britain, a non-member artists has had works accepted for the Annual Oil Exhibition over a period of several years.

For obvious reasons I have not attempted to give you individual histories of the Association's artist members. I hope the foregoing will serve to help you along with what you had in mind. I have been happy to supply the data. I only wish that I had been able to type it on my Underwood--now in the hospital for repairs--instead of on a Corona that I now rarely use. There would have been fewer errors.

May we have a copy of what you write about us? Of course you will understand that this will merely be for our files.

Sincerely yours.

Of the Publicity Committee